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Attorney docket HAN 130

REMARKS

Of the paragraphs added to claim 1, the first is based on Fig. 2 and the text describing Fig. 2, which shows the plural records. The second paragraph, reciting searching, is supported in the specification paragraph spanning pages 13-14.¹ New claim 17, reciting "consists of," further limits the scope of claim 1 that recites "comprises." In response to the rejection:

[3-4] Claim 1 is rejected under §102 over newly-cited Okuno '941. This rejection is respectfully traversed. The Examiner is solicited to consider:

(1) With regard to the Examiner's opinion that Okuno's password is used to control access (page 5, lines 17-22 of the Office Action):

The password of Okuno is used for generating a code (justification identification code) (col. 6, lines 34-36; col. 7, lines 57-63; and the abstract). Then, the codes thus generated are compared one another to identify the justification for the content (col. 8, lines 9-13).

The abstract of Okuno suggests that the access to the data may be prohibited if the codes are not equal (if an improper interpolation is found) when identifying the justification. However, this process to prohibit the access is a post-process which is done based on a result of the justification identification. This post-process may include various kinds of processes, such as a notification process for notifying the user that his/her access is prohibited, as well as the process for prohibiting the access. Here, even if a result of the justification identification is negative, the access is not always prohibited. In view of this point, there is no direct relationship between the password of Okuno and prohibiting the access.

¹ This paragraph reads, "When one document is registered, first, the document management system sequentially searches for, in the document, each character string registered in the "character string" field in the access control list in Fig. 2 which is provided in advance, on the server 21 (step 10). As a search result, if the character string registered in the "character string" field in Fig. 2 is included in (hit to) the document (step 11), the ID information of the record including the character string is added to the document (step 12) and the document with the ID information is registered in the database 23 (step 13). Thus, the access control is set to the document. When one document includes a plurality of character strings registered in Fig. 2, a plurality of pieces of ID information are added to one document and a plurality of access controls are set."

AMENDMENT

6

10/042,316

Attorney docket HAN 130

The Applicants will explain below how an action to prohibit the access to the data, as disclosed in the abstract of Okuno, does not anticipate the Applicants' claimed access control.

(2) With regard to the Examiner's opinion that Okuno discloses access control (page 6, lines 1-5 of the Office Action):

The Applicants' specification, at page 5, lines 3-11, states:

Herein, "access" includes user viewing, printing, and copying to a different medium, of the specific document stored in the database 23, and modification of the document contents. "Access control" means that the viewing, printing, copying and/or modification of a part or all of the specific document is inhibited. Further, "setting of the access control" means that user access is limited by adding predefined ID information to the document registered in the database 23, which will be described later.

New claim 18 recites access control.

Okuno only discloses that access to the data may be prohibited, but is silent on the access control as defined by the Applicants. That is to say, in Okuno, the access control is merely performed in one form of access prohibition.

(3) With regard to lack of consistency of the correspondence between the Applicants' components and the components of Okuno:

The Examiner, in the response to the Applicants' argument, asserts correspondence between the components of the Applicants and the components of Okuno. However, as is argued below, it is not clear which components of Okuno correspond to which of the access controlling information, the identification data, and the specific character string.

Initially, the Examiner states at pages 6-7 of the Office Action: "Based on the comparison between the identification code (controlling information) that is composed of a

AMENDMENT

7

10/042,316

Attorney docket HAN 130

specific character string (password) and an identification data (text element ID), access to the data is limited (prohibited or permitted)."

According to this statement, the claimed access controlling information corresponds to the justification identification code of Okuno; the claimed specific character string corresponds to the password of Okuno; and the claimed identification data corresponds to the text element ID of Okuno.

Further, the Examiner states at page 7 of the Office Action: "As discussed above, the access to the document is limited based on the identification code. Therefore, the system must be able to append the identification data to the document, and the identification data specifying the access control information corresponding to a specific character string if it is included in the document, in order to perform such comparison" (emphasis added).

In the light of the above statement, the claimed identification data corresponds to the identification code (justification identification code) of Okuno.

Still further, the Examiner states at pages 7-8 of the Office Action that "... specific character string corresponds to the specific text of the document. This text is combined with the identification data (password) to generate an identification code. Therefore, in order to generate the code, the system must define whether or not said document includes said specific character string."

In the light of this statement, the claimed identification data corresponds to the password of Okuno, and the claimed specific character string corresponds to the specific text of the document (document elements) of Okuno, respectively.

Therefore, according to the asserted correspondences, the claimed identification data, for example, corresponds to any one of the text element ID, the justification identification code, or the password, according to the circumstances.

AMENDMENT

Attorney docket HAN 130

With respect, the Applicants conclude that there is no consistency in the asserted correspondence between their components and the components of Okuno, and it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's response is not clear.

(4) With regard to rejection of Claim 1:

The Applicants provide a first storage means for registering a document to be accessed and a second storage means for registering access controlling information. Here, the access controlling information is composed of one or a plurality of access controlling information records and each access controlling information record contains a specific character string and identification data for specifying the access controlling information record. According to the Applicants, when registering a certain document in the first storage means or when setting the access control to a document which has already been registered in the first storage means, a search is performed to check whether or not the document includes each specific character string contained in the access controlling information which has already been registered in the second storage means, and if the specific character string is contained in the document, the identification data for specifying the access controlling information record containing the specific character string is added to the document. Then, when access to the document registered in the first storage means is requested, if the document contains the added identification data, access to the document is limited in accordance with the contents of the access controlling information record corresponding to the identification data.

(5) The Examiner states that a second storage means for registering access controlling information including a specific character string and identification data, as claimed, corresponds to an element 30 in Fig. 1 of Okuno, and its corresponding description in col. 5, lines 52-59.

With respect, the element 30 of Okuno does not correspond to the Applicants' second storage means. Col. 5, lines 52-59 of Okuno states that element 30 is a main memory. In Fig. 1, the "password", "justification identification code", "determination result", "text element + password", "text element no.", "comparison code" are illustrated as memory areas within the

AMENDMENT

Attorney docket HAN 130

main memory 30, which temporarily store data which is intermediately generated between the process to create and register the document and the process to identify the justification of the text element (namely, the process to finally obtain the "determination result"), and data which is read out of the other storing device and required for a predetermined process; thus they are just memory areas for storing values corresponding to data. Those values are generated, input, compared, and fetched as required in a predetermined process, followed by being stored in a predetermined memory area as an intermediate data. Here, the processing flow is explained in col. 6, line 25 - col. 8, line 16 of Okuno.

Furthermore, in Okuno those data are required for identifying the justification of the text element, but are not used for performing the access control according to the instant claims. As stated above, after a determination result is obtained by the process for identifying the justification of the text element, the determination result might be used for the process to prohibit access to the data as one of the post-processes.

As stated above, element 30 of Okuno is used to store data or the like intermediately generated between the process for creating and registering the document and the process for identifying the justification of the text element. In contrast, the Applicants' second storage means is directed to storing the access controlling information defining the content according to which the user access is limited. Since any data stored in the element 30 of Okuno does not define the content for limiting the user access, the element 30 does not correspond to the Applicants' second storage means. Okuno also teaches a program memory 10 as a storage means for storing various processing procedures and a data memory 20 for storing document data or the like, in addition to the element 30. However, these memories 10, 20 do not correspond to the Applicants' second storing means.

(6) The Examiner states that the controlling information including a specific character string and identification data for specifying said access controlling information, as claimed, corresponds to what is disclosed in col. 6, lines 17-52 of Okuno.

AMENDMENT

10

10/042,316

Attorney docket HAN 130

The Applicants' access controlling information is composed of one or a plurality of access controlling information records, and each access controlling information record defines the content according to which user access is limited. More specifically, each access controlling information record, as shown in Fig. 2, comprises an "access permitted user" field, an "access level" field, a "valid term" field, and the like. Here, the "access permitted user" field defines the users who are authorized to access a predetermined document, and the "access level" field defines how the access to the predetermined document is limited. The "valid term" field defines the term in which the access level defined in the "access level" field is valid.

On the other hand, Okuno gives in col. 6, lines 17-52, an explanation mainly about the justification identification code. This justification identification code is a code to be used for identifying that an element of the document is created by a document creator specified by the password, and, unlike the above-discussed access controlling information record, the justification identification code does not define the content according to which user access is limited. Namely, the justification identification code of Okuno does not correspond to either of the Applicants' access controlling information or the Applicants' access controlling information record. Further, Okuno is silent on the data which defines the content for limiting the user access.

(7) Each of the access controlling information records composing the Applicants' access controlling information includes the specific character string and identification data for specifying the access controlling information record. The specific character string is to be used upon registering the document. That is, when registering a certain document in the first storage means, a search is performed as to whether or not each of the specific character strings contained in the access controlling information already registered in the second storage means is included in the document. As a result, if the specific character string is included in the document, the identification data for specifying the access controlling information record including the specific character string is added to the document, followed by the document added the identification data

AMENDMENT

Attorney docket HAN 130

being registered in the first storage means. Accordingly, the document is related to the predetermined access controlling information record including the content for access control to the document through the identification data added to the document. If the identification data contained in the document for which the access is requested can be obtained, how to limit the user access to the document is revealed immediately, to thereby limit user access in accordance with the content thus revealed. As stated above, the Applicants' access is not limited only by one method such as prohibition of the access, but is limited by various methods in accordance with the content of the access controlling information record related to the document.

The Examiner asserts that the above-stated feature corresponds to what is disclosed in col. 6, lines 30-33 of Okuno. However, with respect, col. 6, lines 30-33 of Okuno is silent on this feature. Col. 6, lines 30-33 state that the creator of the document, after creating the document, inputs the password through a console 1. Then, the justification identification code is generated on the basis of the content of text elements and the character string of the password. The justification identification code so generated is added to the created document. However, as stated above, the justification identification code of Okuno does not correspond to either one of the Applicants' access controlling information or the Applicants' access controlling information records. Therefore, in Okuno, even if the justification identification code added to the document could be obtained, it is impossible to know how the access control is performed with regard to the document on the basis of the justification identification code.

Further, in Okuno, the content of the justification identification code to be added to the document is generated upon the process of registering the document. To the contrary, the Applicants' identification data to be added to the document is not generated upon registering the documents. More specifically, the Applicants' specification discloses as to the access controlling information at page 13, lines 14-18: "When one document is registered, first, the document management system sequentially searches for, in the document, each character string registered in the "character string" field in the access control list in Fig.2 which is provided in advance, on

AMENDMENT

12

10/042,316

Attorney docket HAN 130

the server 21 (step 10)." That is, the access controlling information is preliminarily prepared when the document is about to be registered. Okuno differs also in this point.

(8) According to the Applicants, in the case where access is requested to the document which has been registered in the first storage means, if the document includes the identification data, the access to the document is limited in accordance with the content of the access controlling information record corresponding to the identification data.

The Examiner stated in the Office Action that the above stated feature corresponds to what is disclosed in col. 7, line 44 to col. 8, line 28 and the abstract of Okuno; with respect, this is incorrect. What is disclosed in col. 7, line 44 to col. 8, line 28 of Okuno is that the content of the justification identification code corresponding to a designated document data is compared with the content of the justification identification code generated on the basis of the password which is input this time to perform a determination as to whether or not the text element is valid, followed by displaying the determination result. Further, the abstract of Okuno only discloses that a process to prohibit the user access to the data is performed on the basis of the result of the justification identification of the text element.

(9) As stated above, the Applicants include the second storage means for registering the access controlling information, whereas Okuno fails to disclose anything that corresponds to the claimed access controlling information. Further, Okuno is silent on what could correspond to the second storage means for registering the access controlling information. Still further, Okuno is silent on what corresponds to the Applicants' specific character string contained in the access controlling information records and identification data. Also, according to the Applicants, the search is performed when registering the document as to whether or not the document includes each specific character string contained in the access controlling information having already registered in the second storage means, and if the specific character string is contained in the document the identification data for specifying the access controlling information record

AMENDMENT

13

10/042,316

Attorney docket HAN 130

containing the specific character string is added to the document, whereas Okuno fails to disclose such a feature.

In view of the above, the instant claims are distinguished from Okuno, and the claims are novel.

[5-6] Claims 2-16 are rejected under §103 over Okuno in view of Numao. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Okuno fails to teach or suggest such features as the content of the access controlling information, the process when registering the document, and the like. Therefore, the claims are not obvious in view of Okuno, as well as not being anticipated.

Each of Claims 2-16 incorporates the features recited in Claim 1, and therefore, these claims also involve the inventive steps according to the same reasons stated above with regard to Claim 1.

An interview request is attached. The Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number in boldface to arrange an interview to take place on a Tuesday, when the attorney is in the DC area.

Reconsideration and allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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AMENDMENT

14

10/042,316